

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 12, 2000

TENNESSEE WHEAT GROWERS EXPECTING ANOTHER GOOD YEAR

Currently, 80 percent of the winter wheat crop in Tennessee is rated in mostly good-to-excellent condition, the second highest crop condition rating for this time of year since records began in 1987. Mild spring weather allowed producers to spray and fertilize their crop on schedule, and most areas received little to no freeze damage. Disease and insect pressure has been light for most of the Spring; however, growers have recently encountered more problems because of the cool, wet conditions experienced across the State over the last few weeks. Sunshine and drier weather should help alleviate some of these problems. Harvest of the crop is expected to begin on schedule around the middle of June.

Based on a May 1 survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, wheat producers in the State intend to harvest 380,000 acres this year, compared to 340,000 last year. With 580,000 acres seeded last fall, the remaining 200,000 acres will be used as a cover crop, or cut for hay and silage. The average State yield is forecast at 50 bushels per acre, 4 bushels below last year’s record yield, but the second highest yield on record. If realized, this will result in total production of 19.0 million bushels, the highest production in the State since 1988.

U.S. Winter Wheat

Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.65 billion bushels, down 3 percent from 1999. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 47.5 bushels per acre, 0.3 less than last year's record. If realized, this would be the second highest yield on record. Harvested grain acreage for 2000 is forecast at 34.7 million acres, down 2 percent from 1999. If realized, this will be the smallest winter wheat area since 1971. Good or better condition ratings of winter wheat on April 29 at 60 percent was 13 percentage points below 1999. The Texas condition rating was only 12 percent good to excellent for the same period.

WINTER WHEAT: TENNESSEE, SURROUNDING STATES, AND U.S., MAY 1, 2000 WITH COMPARISONS <sup>1</sup>

State	Acreage Harvested		Yield Per Acre		Production	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
	1,000 Acres		Bushels		1,000 Bushels	
Arkansas	920	1,080	56.0	55.0	51,520	59,400
Georgia	225	240	43.0	45.0	9,675	10,800
Kentucky	410	430	60.0	55.0	24,600	23,650
Mississippi	165	210	50.0	43.0	8,250	9,030
Missouri	920	920	48.0	48.0	44,160	44,160
North Carolina	580	590	49.0	52.0	28,420	30,680
TENNESSEE	340	380	54.0	50.0	18,360	19,000
Virginia	240	205	57.0	65.0	13,680	13,325
United States	35,572	34,709	47.8	47.5	1,699,989	1,648,805

<sup>1</sup> 2000 forecast, 1999 final.

MILD WINTER HELPS STRETCH OUT HAY SUPPLIES

Stocks of all hay on Tennessee farms totaled 607,000 tons on May 1, 2000, down 4 percent from May 1 of the previous year. Disappearance of hay from December 1, 1999 to May 1, 2000 totaled 2.05 million tons, 19 percent lower than the 1998 crop disappearance of 2.54 million tons for the same period. Going into the winter month’s many livestock producers in Tennessee were concerned about the amount of hay on hand. Last year’s summer drought reduced overall hay production, and many producers either liquidated their herds or started feeding hay much earlier than normal due to poor pasture conditions. Fortunately, Tennessee experienced a mild winter and most producers had ample supplies of hay available.